

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on United States Agricultural Loan Credit for the Soviet Union

June 11, 1991

President Bush has informed President Gorbachev today that the United States will meet the Soviet request for up to \$1.5 billion in credit guarantees toward the purchase of American agricultural products. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Madigan will follow up immediately with Soviet officials to work out the details of this agreement.

The President's offer specifies U.S. willingness to make the credit guarantees available in three tranches over the next 9 months—\$600 million this month, \$500 million in October 1991, and \$400 million in February 1992. The President made this decision after having received the views of the Presidential delegation he sent to the U.S.S.R. in late May to study the grain request and the food distribution system there.

In addition to meeting the Soviet request for credit guarantees, the President today also expressed to President Gorbachev his continued interest in collaborating on a long-term effort to improve the food dis-

tribution system in the U.S.S.R., primarily through the introduction of market measures. The United States is prepared to form a high-level team of Government and private experts to assist the Soviets in this effort.

In making this decision, the President took into consideration the record of the Soviet Government in meeting its official obligations. The President's decision also followed assurances from the Soviet Government that the grains made available through the credit guarantees would be fairly distributed among Soviet Republics and the Baltic States. The President's decision reflects the administration's desire to promote a continued positive evolution in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. In particular, we hope that this assistance will help to stabilize the food situation in that country.

Note: Press Secretary Fitzwater read the statement to reporters at 4:38 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Alfredo Cristiani Buckard of El Salvador

June 12, 1991

President Bush. Let me say I am just delighted you're here, and we have a lot to talk about when we're alone. But I'll say before we are that we support you and what you're trying to do and the courageous steps you've taken—the free election process being part of it, of course—but what you're trying to do and bring peace there. And I must say you have our respect and full support. And let there be no doubt about that anywhere, in this country, in Salvador, wherever else it may be.

Reporter. Mr. President are you taking questions from us today?

President Bush. No questions today if you

don't mind.

Q. Perhaps the President of El Salvador would like to.

President Bush. Well, if he'd like to answer a question, but he knows that he's going to have a press opportunity later on. He knows that seldom do I take them here, but he can do it any way he wants. I'm not trying to slant—

Q. Would you talk to us about the status of the investigation into the killings of the Jesuits, sir?

President Cristiani. Afterwards, after we—there will be a press conference tomorrow.